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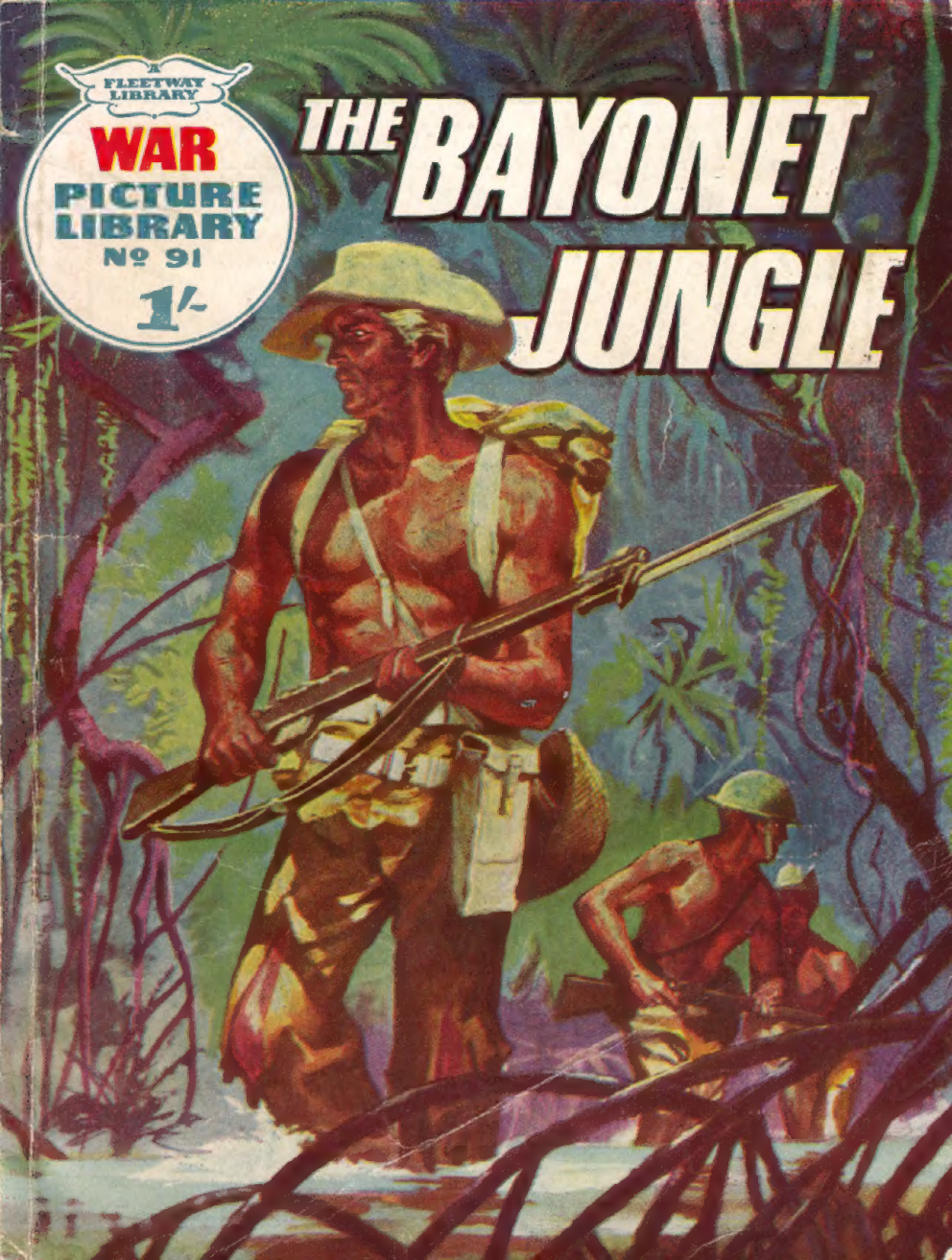

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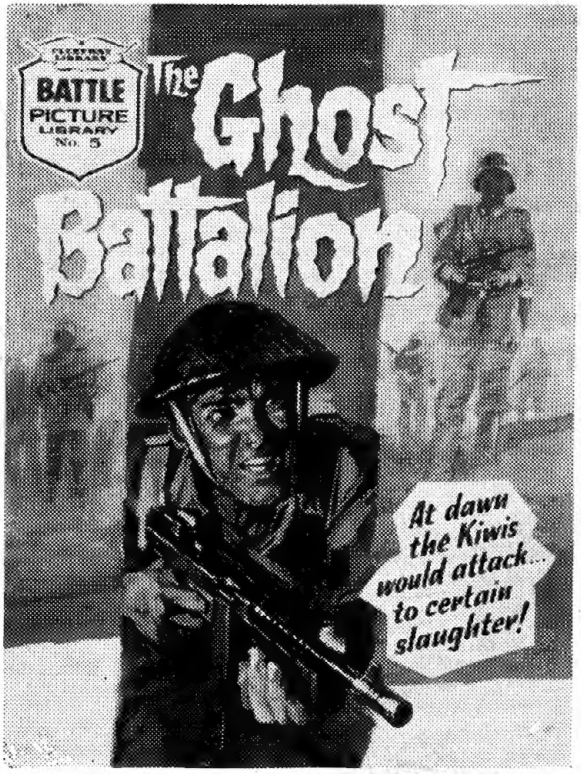

TWO Dramatic, All-action Issues Every Month

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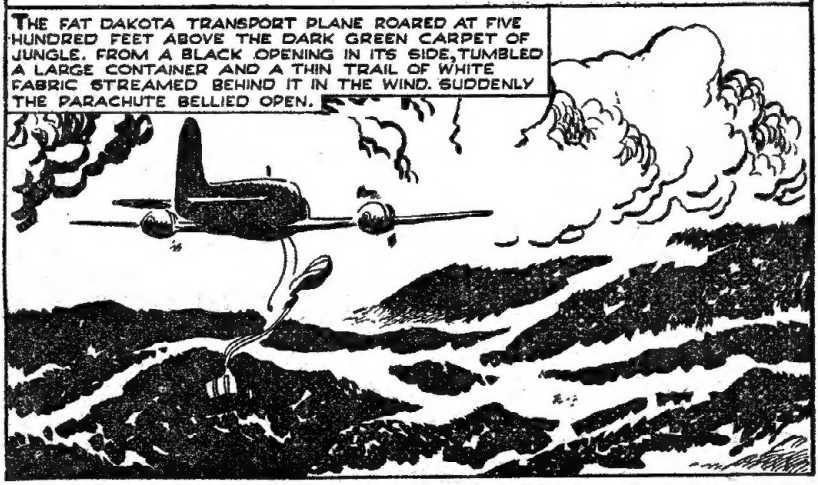
Chapter 1. SOLE SURVIVOR



THE LEAN, WIRY OFFICER COMMANDING 'A' COMPANY, MAJOR WEBB, MENTALLY JUDGED THE DISTANCE TO THE STRAY CONTAINER... AND SNAPPED A SWIFT ORDER...
WE NEED THAT FOOD AND AMMO BADLY, JAPS OR NO JAPS! SERGEANT BAXTER, TAKE FOUR OR FIVE MEN AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO!
RIGHT, SIR!
THE PATROL SLIPPED NOISELESSLY THROUGH THE THICK UNDERGROWTH, EVERY SENSE HAIR-TRIGGERED FOR DANGER.
THERE IT IS, SERGEANT!
ALL RIGHT, GREEN, I'VE GOT EYES IN ME 'EAD!
THE JAPANESE WERE WELL AWARE HOW DESPERATELY THE BRITISH NEEDED THE PARACHUTED SUPPLIES AND PLANNED ACCORDINGLY...
AH YES... WE WERE RIGHT! THEY COME NOW! A FEW MORE PACES, WHITE CURS...

THE JAPANESE WAITED MOTIONLESS, EYES COLD AND UNBLINKING LIKE THOSE OF POISONOUS LIZARDS...
LET THEM COME CLOSER... CLOSER. WE WANT TO DESTROY THEM ALL... AND TO TAKE NO PRISONERS!

JACK GREEN WAS UNEASILY CONSCIOUS OF THE STILLNESS... A SINISTER STILLNESS THAT UNSETTLED HIM SO THAT HE STARTED NERVOUSLY WHEN THE SERGEANT SPOKE, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IN A WHISPER...
COME ON, LADS, GET BUSY UNLOADING IT. THE SOONER WE'RE BACK WITH THE COMPANY THE BETTER. GREEN, JONES, KEEP YOUR EYES SKINNED AND...

HE FROZE SUDDENLY, ALARM LEAPING TO HIS EYES, AS HE GLIMPSED MOVEMENT AMONG THE BUSHES AHEAD. HIS LIPS PARTED TO SHOUT A WARNING, BUT HE WAS TOO LATE!

A SUDDEN DEADLY HAIL OF FIRE CUT THE PATROL DOWN-AND GREEN WAS ONE OF THE VERY FEW TO REACH COVER. HE PUMPED BULLETS AT THE INVISIBLE ENEMY EVEN AS OTHER MEN FELL AROUND HIM. THEIR CHANCES SEEMED HOPELESS...
TRY TO GET BACK, GREENIE! DON'T TRY TO BE A HERO! I'M DONE FOR AND SO IS EVERYONE ELSE! DON'T YOU REALISE IT? YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE FIRING AND...
...BUT I'M NOT NOW, CORP! HERE COME SOME MORE OF OUR LADS! WE'RE SAVED!

ON HEARING THE BURST OF FIRING, THE MAJOR HAD SENT REINFORCEMENTS AND FACED BY SUPERIOR FORCES, THE ENEMY FIRED A FINAL BURST AND RETREATED. BACK IN THE COMPANY AREA, GREEN REPORTED WHAT HAD HAPPENED.
HALF THE PATROL DIED IN THE FIRST VOLLEY, SIR, INCLUDING SERGEANT BAXTER. WE...WE DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE.
ALL RIGHT, GREEN. GO AND GET YOURSELF SOME TEA, AND THEN REPORT TO SERGEANT FREEMAN, THREE PLATOON.

THAT LAD'S LUCKY! TWICE HE'S BEEN THE LONE SURVIVOR OF A PATROL. WELL, SERGEANT, A HIGH PRICE TO PAY FOR THOSE SUPPLIES ...FOUR MEN AND AN N.C.O. KILLED
WITHOUT EVEN THOSE FEW SUPPLIES, SIR... WE'D BE FINISHED!
JACK GREEN'S RECEPTION FROM SOME MEMBERS OF No.3 PLATOON HAD BEEN COOL AND UNEASY.
FOSTER KNEW HIM BACK IN BLIGHTY. HE WAS IN A LEAVE TRUCK THAT OVERTURNED. EVERYONE WAS HURT EXCEPT GREEN! THEN HE WAS THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF A PATROL! HE'S GOT A JINX ON HIM!
IT'S BAD ENOUGH THIS JUNGLE FIGHTING, WITHOUT HAVING SOMEONE WITH YOU WHO'S GOT TROUBLE ON HIS TAIL!
SERGEANT FREEMAN AND THE CHEERFUL COCKNEY, SMILER COBB, KNEW OF GREEN'S REPUTATION AND PROTESTED DISGUSTEDLY...
THAT'S A LOAD OF TRIPE AND YOU KNOW IT, JENKINS! THE ODDS ARE HEAVY AGAINST ANYONE OUT HERE!
YOU SAID IT, SARGE! HE'S NO JONAH! IF YOU ASK ME, 'E'S BLINKIN' LUCKY! WHAT DO YOU SAY TOMMO?
MY DEAR OLD MUM... BLESS HER... ALWAYS SAYS, WHAT'S TO BE IS TO BE, AND I THINK SHE'S RIGHT!

THE SUPERSTITIOUS JENKINS SCOWLED.
HE'S LUCKY, YOU SAY? I KNEW A MINER LIKE HIM ONCE, MAN! HE BROUGHT BAD LUCK TO EVERYONE ELSE. IT'S TROUBLE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE NOW HE'S WITH US!
OH, SHUT UP, JENKINS!
YES.. PUT A SOCK IN IT! HERE COMES THE O.C.
MAJOR WEBB TOOK SERGEANT FREEMAN ASIDE...
AS YOU KNOW, 'C' COMPANY ARE NORMALLY GUARD COMPANY BUT AS THEY ARE ON A FIGHTING PATROL, BRIGADE H.Q. WANT US TO PROVIDE A GUARD FOR THE AMMUNITION DUMP. IT FALLS TO YOUR PLATOON, SERGEANT.
RIGHT, SIR. WE'LL GET CRACKING!
MINUTES LATER, THE PLATOON WERE SWINGING OFF THROUGH THE JUNGLE TOWARDS THE BRIGADE AREA.
JUST OUR BAD LUCK TO COP NIGHT DUTY ON THE ARMS DUMP! I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING WORSE!
C.O.H.Q.
25th PADUAN DIVISION
L. of C. R.B.
S.&T.
I CAN! LISTENING TO YOUR GLOOMY NATTERING! GIVE IT A REST, JENKINS, OR YOU'LL SEND US ALL ROUND THE BEND!

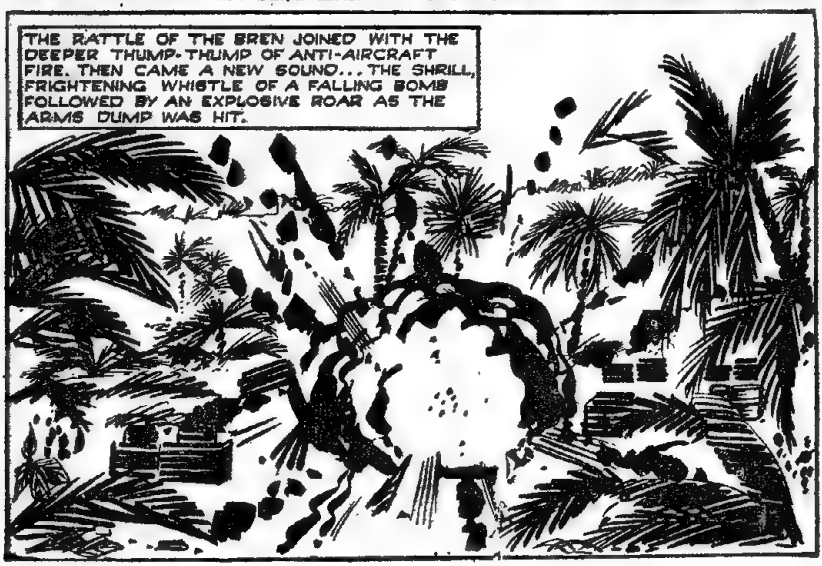
THE DISGRUNTLED JENKINS GLARED BUT HE SAID NOTHING MORE AND FINALLY THEY REACHED BRIGADE H.Q.
THIS IS THE BRIGADE AREA ALL RIGHT, MATES! THEY'VE GOT NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT BREW UP!
THE COOK'S PROBABLY LAYING IT ON FOR US...I HOPE! JENKINS AND GREEN...YOU'LL TAKE FIRST AND LAST SHIFT.

JENKINS SWALLOWED AND GLANCED SIDEWAYS AT GREEN.
IT'S NOT TROUBLE WE'RE LIKELY TO GET HERE, IS IT, SARGE? TOO FAR BACK FROM THE NIPS, AREN'T WE?
YES, BUT THE O.C. SAYS COLLABORATORS ARE OPERATING IN THE AREA SO NO DOZING OFF. I'LL SLIP YOU A MUG OF CHAR AS SOON AS I CAN!

TWENTY MINUTES LATER FREEMAN RETURNED WITH SOME HOT TEA...
HERE YOU ARE, LADS, TEA UP! THIS IS DUSTY...HE'S A CHAR WALLAH IN THE BRIGADE COOK-HOUSE...GOT A LETTER SIGNED BY THE BRIGADE MAJOR SAYING HE'S TO BE TRUSTED. SO IT'S NOT POISONED, JENKINS. YOU NEEDN'T LOOK DOWN YOUR NOSE!
WELL, MAN, YOU NEVER KNOW!
THE NIGHT SEEMED NEVER ENDING FOR JACK GREEN, WHEN HE WAS AWAKENED FOR HIS SECOND SPELL ON GUARD. HE MISSED HIS OLD FRIENDS AND A LUMP CAME IN HIS THROAT AS HE THOUGHT OF THEM...
MOST OF THREE PLATOON LEAVE ME ALONE AS THOUGH I HAD THE PLAGUE. THEY DON'T SAY ANYTHING BUT I KNOW THEY THINK I'LL BRING 'EM BAD LUCK.
THE APPROACHING HUM OF AN AIRCRAFT ENGINE DREW HIS GAZE UP TOWARDS THE PALE DAWN SKY. SUDDENLY, HE STIFFENED...
BY HEAVENS! THAT'S A JAP PLANE...IT MUST HAVE SPOTTED THE DUMP! IT'S DIVING...WE'RE FOR IT NOW! LOOK OUT, JENKINS!

THE ROAR OF THE ENGINE INCREASED TO A CRESCENDO AS THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT DIVED DOWN OUT OF THE SKY.
TAKE COVER, MAN! WE'LL ALL BE BLOWN TO BITS!
ALREADY MEN WERE DASHING FROM THEIR BIVOUACS, RIFLES AND BRENS IN HANDS...
OPEN FIRE! SHOOT THE RICE-CHEWING SKUNK OUT OF THE SKY!

BULLETS LASHED THE FOLIAGE ABOUT SERGEANT FREEMAN AS HE STEADIED THE BREN AND BEGAN TO SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER.
COME ON, NIP! YOU MAY GET US... BUT THIS TIME YOU'VE BITTEN OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW! YOU'RE RIGHT BANG IN MY SIGHTS!


THE RATTLE OF THE BREN JOINED WITH THE DEEPER THUMP-THUMP OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE. THEN CAME A NEW SOUND... THE SHRILL, FRIGHTENING WHISTLE OF A FALLING BOMB FOLLOWED BY AN EXPLOSIVE ROAR AS THE ARMS DUMP WAS HIT.

IN A SECOND, ALL WAS CONFUSION AS PILE AFTER PILE OF AMMUNITION BLEW UP. BUT THE ENEMY PLANE HAD NOT ESCAPED UNSCATHED...
WE'VE GOT THE RAT! WE'VE GOT HIM! HE'S COMING DOWN!
A SOBBING CRY FOR HELP REACHED THE EARS OF PRIVATE JACK GREEN FROM AMIDST THE TANGLED UNDERGROWTH NEARBY...
WHAT WAS THAT CRY? IT CAME FROM OVER THERE! SOME POOR DEVIL MUST HAVE STOPPED A NASTY ONE!

A FEW YARDS FROM THE CLEARING HE CAME UPON A SPRAWLED FIGURE IN DIRTY WHITE NATIVE CLOTHES...
IT'S DUSTY, THE BURMAN, POOR DEVIL. BUT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO FOR HIM. HE MUST HAVE BEEN KILLED BY FLYING SHRAPNEL!
HELP WAS NEEDED ELSEWHERE AND HE RAN OFF, COMPLETELY UNAWARE THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAD CREPT UPON THE SCENE, SOMEONE WHO COVETED THE LETTER OF TRUSTWORTHINESS CARRIED BY THE DEAD BURMAN...
IT WAS ANOTHER NATIVE, THE TREACHEROUS COLLABORATOR WHO HAD RADIOED THE DUMP'S POSITION TO THE ENEMY. AN EVIL GRIN OF TRIUMPH ON HIS FACE, THE MAN SLIPPED AWAY INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE JUNGLE.
THIS GOOD THING FOR ME. ONE DAY... PERHAPS SOON... BRIGADE MAJOR'S LETTER COME IN USEFUL TO ME.

Chapter 2. JUNGLE AMBUSH

THE HEAT SCORCHED GREEN'S FACE AS HE FINALLY FLUNG ASIDE THE EMPTY EXTINGUISHER AND HELPED SERGEANT FREEMAN DRAG OUT THE SMOULDERING SACKS.
WE'D HAVE LOST THE LOT IF YOU HADN'T SPOTTED IT, GREEN! WHO SAID YOU WERE UNLUCKY? THEY MUST BE ROUND THE BEND! AH... THAT'S THE LOT! SOME OF IT'S DAMAGED BUT MOST OF IT'S ALL RIGHT.
NICE WORK, CHAPS!
THE BRIGADE MAJOR CONGRATULATED SERGEANT FREEMAN AND GREEN ON THEIR PROMPT ACTION.
...THE MAIL MEANS A GREAT DEAL TO THE MEN... TO US ALL! TELL YOUR C.O. WE'LL HAVE THE BATTALION MAIL SENT DOWN JUST AS SOON AS IT'S BEEN SORTED.
VERY GOOD, SIR. COME ON, GREEN.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE COMPANY HAD ORDERS TO ATTACK AN ENEMY-HELD VILLAGE TWO MILES AHEAD. IN OPEN ORDER, THE TROOPS ADVANCED SLOWLY, CAUTIOUSLY, THROUGH THE JUNGLE TO THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE...
MAYBE THE JAPS HAVE GOT A COLLABORATOR THERE WITH A RADIO SET!
IF THERE IS I'D LIKE TO GET MY HANDS ON HIM! I DON'T THINK THAT PLANE COMING OVER AND SPOTTING THE DUMP WAS A LUCKY BREAK FOR THE JAPS. SOMEONE HAD TIPPED THEM OFF!
THE JINX IS WORKING, I KNOW IT IS! FIRST THE RAID ON THE DUMP... AND I BET THERE'S WORSE TO COME...

THE SUN BLAZED DOWN FROM A BRASSY SKY AND STEAM ROSE FROM THE ROTTING VEGETATION. FREEMAN GLANCED AT HIS WATCH... THE SILENT SECONDS TICKED BY... THEN...
ALL RIGHT, MEN! LET'S GO AND WINKLE THEM OUT!
WINKLE IS RIGHT! AND IF YOU ASK ME, THE ONLY THING THAT'LL SHIFT 'EM IS A PIN... DRAWN OUT OF A GRENADE.

INSTANTLY, THE ENEMY DEFENCES OPENED UP. BULLETS RIPPED THROUGH THE TREES. SHELLS WHINED CLOSE, EXPLODING WITH TERRIFYING FORCE...
AYE, LAD, BUT NOT FOR LONG! THIS IS THREE PLATOON, REMEMBER? WE'LL SOON HAVE 'EM OUT OF THERE!
THE BLIGHTERS ARE WELL DUG IN, SARGE!
BUT THE JAPANESE RAKED THE JUNGLE WITH A MURDEROUS MACHINE-GUN FIRE THAT PINNED THE BRITISH TROOPS DOWN.
THIS IS HOPELESS, SARGE! WE'LL NEVER GET THROUGH UNTIL WE'VE FIXED THOSE MACHINE-GUNS!
YOU'RE RIGHT, THERE, SMILER! LET'S SE_ WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT! TWO MEN MIGHT BE ABLE TO SLIP THROUGH THEIR LINES!

BULLETS GOUGED UP THE EARTH, RICOCHETED OFF THE TREES AS THE TWO MEN WORMED THEIR WAY ROUND IN A HALF CIRCLE...
LUMME, HOW MUCH FURTHER?
WE'RE ALMOST ON THE JAP GUNNERS!

INCH BY INCH THEY EDGED FORWARD. FREEMAN FELT THE SWEAT BREAK OUT ON HIS FOREHEAD. HIS EYES FELT RAW AND STRAINED AS HE SEARCHED THE CAMOUFLAGING GREEN VEGETATION FOR THE ENEMY POSTS...
LOOK! THERE'S THE MOB THAT'S BEEN KEEPING US PINNED DOWN!

FREEMAN SNATCHED THE PIN FROM A GRENADE AND FLUNG IT UNERRINGLY...
AGGH! IT'S THE BRITISH! THEY HAVE SURROUNDED US!

BEFORE THE ENEMY COULD SWING THEIR MACHINE-GUN ROUND, THE GRENADE EXPLODED IN THE WEAPON PIT.

IN A QUICK DASH, THE TWO MEN REACHED THE SILENT ENEMY POSITION AND AT ONCE THE SERGEANT YELLED TO HIS MEN...
ALL RIGHT, LADS! ADVANCE! WE'VE GOT THE BLIGHTERS COLD!

THE COCKNEY SOLDIER WAS RIGHT. WHOOPING AND CHEERING, THE PLATOON SURGED FORWARD...
THE JAPANESE FOUGHT BACK SAVAGELY, BUT THERE WAS NO HOLDING THREE PLATOON. REMORSELESSLY, THEY CLOSED IN ON THE NATIVE VILLAGE...
...THAT'S FOR SAM...AND SKID! AND ALL THE REST!

COLD STEEL FLASHED IN THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT AS THEY DROVE THE JAPANESE FROM THE BLAZING HUTS. THE FEW THAT ESCAPED THEM, FLED IN DISORDER INTO THE DARK GREEN DEPTHS OF THE JUNGLE.
THAT'S THE LOT OF 'EM.. TAKE A MESSAGE BACK TO THE O.C. THAT THE VILLAGE IS CLEAR.
AS TOMKINS, THE PLATOON RUNNER, TURNED AWAY...
NICE GOING, LADS! NOW GET DUG IN...THE JAPS MAY BE BACK TONIGHT. THEY DON'T GIVE UP...
SUDDENLY, SERGEANT FREEMAN FROZE AS A FAINT, WAVERING CRY CAME TO THEIR EARS...
WHAT WAS THAT?
IT CAME FROM OVER THERE, SARGE! ONE OF OUR CHAPS MAY BE LYING WOUNDED IN THE LONG GRASS...

THE CRIES LED THEM TO A BLAZING NATIVE HUT...
CAREFUL, SMILER. IT MAY BE A JAP! YOU KNOW WHAT CUNNING SWABS THEY ARE! IT COULD BE A TRAP!
TOO BLOOMIN' TRUE, SARGE! BUT IF IT IS I'M READY FOR 'EM!
EVERY SENSE ALERT, SMILER PLUNGED INSIDE...
IT'S ONE OF THE NATIVES! QUICK! WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM OUT OF HERE...THE ROOF'S GOING TO CAVE IN ANY MINUTE!
THE SERGEANT SPRANG FORWARD TO MOVE THE BLAZING BEAM AND THE COCKNEY SOLDIER LIFTED THE BURMAN IN HIS ARMS.
I THINK HE'S ONLY BADLY SHAKEN UP, BUT WE'D BETTER MAKE SURE! RUN AND GET THE MEDICAL ORDERLY, ONE OF YOU!

THE BURMAN WAS NOT SADLY HURT AND LATER, AFTER HE HAD RESTED AND BEEN QUESTIONED BY THE O.C., HE PREPARED TO LEAVE IN SEARCH OF HIS FAMILY WHO HAD FLED INTO THE JUNGLE WHEN THE JAPANESE HAD SEIZED THE VILLAGE.
THE JAPANESE THEY LEAVE ME TO DIE! THEY LAUGH AND SPIT IN MY FACE. BUT YOU SAVE MY LIFE. I NOT FORGET YOU!
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MATE!
AS THE GRATEFUL BURMAN LIMPED OFF INTO THE JUNGLE, GREEN AND SMILER HEARD A WELCOME SHOUT FROM SERGEANT FREEMAN.
MAIL UP! ONE FOR GREEN... WHERE'S GREEN? ONE FOR YOU, TOMKINS...

TOMKINS OPENED HIS LETTER EAGERLY, AND BEGAN TO READ. BUT AT ONCE HIS FACE WENT DEATHLY WHITE, A STRANGLED CRY BURST FROM HIS LIPS...
OH NO... NO!
WHAT IS IT, TOMMO? NOT BAD NEWS...
TOMKINS GLANCED ACROSS AT HIS FRIEND, SMILER, AND THEN TURNED AWAY. HIS EYES MIRRORED HIS ANGUISH AND WHEN HE SPOKE, HIS VOICE TREMBLED...
I...I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHY I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM MY MOTHER LATELY...AND... AND NOW I KNOW. SHE... SHE'S DEAD...WAS KILLED IN AN AIR RAID ON LONDON.
I...I'M SORRY, TOMMO...
IT WAS PLAIN THAT TOMKINS WAS VERY UPSET AND WHEN HE WALKED AWAY, SMILER MADE NO ATTEMPT TO STOP HIM...
POOR DEVIL! HE THOUGHT A LOT OF HIS MOTHER! THIS PLATOON'S BEEN PRETTY LUCKY, NOT MANY CASUALTIES UNTIL NOW. BUT SINCE GREEN'S JOINED US, WE...OH HECK! WHAT AM I THINKING? JENKINS IS MAKING ME AS DAFT AS HE IS!

THE NEWS OF TOMKINS' LOSS SPREAD THROUGH THE PLATOON AND MANY OF THE MEN SEEMED TO SHARE JENKINS' DISMAL FOREBODINGS ABOUT GREEN.
LOOK AT POOR OLD GREEN, SARGE. THE BOYS ARE ACTING TO HIM LIKE A LOT OF KIDS...
DON'T THEY REALISE CASUALTIES HERE AND AT HOME ARE INEVITABLE? SOMEONE HAS TO DIE! WE JUST HOPE IT WON'T BE OURSELVES . . . I'LL HAVE A TALK WITH THEM LATER ON . . .
WISH YOU WOULD, SARGE! BY THE WAY, I HEAR A D.R.'s JUST LEFT H.Q. WHAT'S IN THE WIND?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE, SMILER. WE'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH... I'M ON MY WAY THERE NOW. JUST GO AND KEEP GREEN COMPANY, WILL YOU?
AN HOUR LATER, SERGEANT FREEMAN RETURNED... HE WAS SMILING.
GOOD NEWS, LADS! STAND BY TO MOVE OFF! WE'RE BEING WITHDRAWN!
HURRAY! WHO SAID GREEN WAS A JINX, EH, JENKINS? I BET WE'RE GOING TO A REST CAMP AND NOT BEFORE TIME, EITHER!

JUBILANTLY, THE INFANTRYMEN CLIMBED INTO THE TRUCKS THAT HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP FOR THEM. THEY HAD BEEN IN ACTION FOR SEVERAL WEEKS WITHOUT A BREAK.
COME ON, CLIMB ABOARD. ANYONE WOULD THINK YOU LIKED IT HERE.
BUT THERE WAS ONE MAN IN THE PLATOON WHO DID NOT RESPOND TO THE HIGH SPIRITS OF THE OTHERS. TOMKINS' FACE WAS GREY AND DRAWN, CAUSING SMILER TO STARE AT HIM ANXIOUSLY.
KEEP YOUR PECKER UP, TOMMO! A SPELL OF LEAVE WOULD DO US THE WORLD OF GOOD, YOU'LL SEE!
LEAVE? WHAT DO I WANT LEAVE FOR? JUST TIME TO SIT AROUND AND THINK! LET'S GET ON WITH THIS ACCURSED WAR!

THE WORDS SPAT SAVAGELY FROM HIS LIPS AND SMILER TRIED TO FIND WORDS TO COMFORT HIM...
LOOK OUT! JAPS!
STEADY, TOMMO! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, MATE, BUT...

A SAVAGE BURST OF FIRE RAKED THE TRUCKS AND THEY SKIDDED OFF THE ROAD AND JOLTED TO A HALT. EVERY MAN WHO HAD NOT BEEN CUT DOWN IN THAT FIRST VOLLEY SNATCHED UP HIS WEAPON AND SERGEANT FREEMAN YELLED AN ORDER...
AMBUSH! MAKE FOR THE TREES!

A PITIFUL FEW REACHED THE COVER OF THE JUNGLE. SOME OF THEM LOOKED BACK AND SAW ONE OF THEIR NUMBER STANDING FEARLESSLY OUT IN THE OPEN, HIS RIFLE BLAZING AT THE ENEMY. IT WAS TOMKINS.
YOU TREACHEROUS YELLOW RATS! COME ON OUT IN THE OPEN AND FIGHT!
ONE AFTER ANOTHER, ENEMY SOLDIERS FELL TO HIS GUN AND HE REMAINED UNSCATHED, BUT SERGEANT FREEMAN KNEW IT COULD NOT LAST.
THE CRAZY IDIOT! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM? HE'LL NEVER...
SMILER CRIED OUT IN DISMAY...
TOMMO... THE DEVILS HAVE GOT HIM!
IT'S WHAT HE WANTED IF YOU ASK ME, SMILER! BUT THIS IS NO TIME FOR SENTIMENT... THEY'RE SURROUNDING US! IF WE DON'T FIGHT OUR WAY OUT WE'VE HAD IT!

Chapter 3. VILLAGE OF TREACHERY

GREEN SAID NOTHING. THE HEAT HAD SAPPED HIS ENERGY AND HE FELT TOO EXHAUSTED TO ARGUE. HE LAY BACK, LETTING A MOUTHFUL OF THE WARM WATER TRICKLE SLOWLY DOWN HIS PARCHED THROAT...
SMASHING THAT DRINK WAS... JUST LIKE THE WINE MY MOTHER USED TO MAKE.
IT'S ALL YOU'LL GET FOR A WHILE, JENKINS, ACCORDING TO MY MAP WE'RE STILL SOME DISTANCE FROM A STREAM!
DREAMING OF THE LITTLE FARM NESTLING AT THE FOOT OF THE TALL MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS, JENKINS HAD PUT DOWN HIS WATER BOTTLE BEHIND HIM... AND THEN CAME DISASTER. GREEN STRETCHED HIS LEGS... AND THE BOTTLE FELL ON ITS SIDE...
MY WATER! MY WATER! LOOK OUT!

JENKINS SPRANG TO HIS FEET, EXHAUSTION FORGOTTEN. HIS FACE WAS MURDEROUS...
GOSH! I'M SORRY!
SORRY YOU ARE! SORRY! YOU CLUMSY FOOL! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITHOUT WATER! WHY YOU...YOU...

JENKINS LUNGED WILDLY AT GREEN AND HIS BONY FIST WHISTLED PAST THE OTHER'S CHEEK. THEN SERGEANT FREEMAN WAS SHOUTING, HIS VOICE HARD AND UNYIELDING...
HOLD IT, YOU TWO! HOLD IT, I SAY! HAVEN'T YOU HAD ENOUGH SCRAPPING? CALM DOWN, JENKINS... GREEN DIDN'T KNOCK IT OVER DELIBERATELY! IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!
ACCIDENT! IT'S WATER I WANT... I'M FINISHED WITHOUT WATER!

AT LAST, JENKINS BEGAN TO QUIETEN AND THE SERGEANT HASTENED TO HEAL THE BREACH.
YOU CAN SHARE MINE, JENKINS, SO STOP NATTERING! WE'LL GET ON THE MOVE AND FIND THIS STREAM, THEN WE CAN ALL REFILL OUR WATER BOTTLES! LET'S GO!
THOUGHTS OF FRESH WATER MADE THEM FORCE THEIR WEARY LEGS TO A QUICKER PACE BUT WHEN THEY FINALLY REACHED THE STREAM... A BITTER SHOCK AWAITED THEM.
BY HEAVENS! IT'S DRIED UP!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW? MY TONGUE'S JUST LIKE A BIT OF CHEWED LEATHER!
JENKINS GLARED AT GREEN WHO BIT HIS LIPS AND DROPPED HIS EYES. BUT NO WORDS WERE SPOKEN. SERGEANT FREEMAN TOOK A COMPASS BEARING AND ONCE MORE THEY SET OFF. SLOW TORTUROUS HOURS PASSED AND WITH EVERY STEP THEY FELT WEAKER. THE LAST OF THEIR MEAGRE RATION OF WATER WAS DRUNK...
...AND THAT'S THE LOT, BLOKES! BUT CHINS UP! WE SHOULDN'T BE FAR FROM THE NEXT STREAM, SO KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED! I'VE GOT A FEELING THAT THIS TIME WE SHALL BE LUCKY!

BUT THE SERGEANT WAS LYING. THE NEXT STREAM WAS STILL MANY MILES AWAY. IT WAS JENKINS WHO BEGAN TO CRACK FIRST...
THAT CURSED GREEN... HE'S DONE FOR US ALL... HE'S A JINX, I TELL YOU... A JINX! I'M FINISHED, MAN! I CAN'T GO ON!
STEADY, JENKINS, STEADY!
BUT JENKINS BEGAN TO SHOUT DELIRIOUSLY, HIS EYES WILD AND GLARING. HE SEEMED ABOUT TO HURL HIMSELF AT GREEN AND SERGEANT FREEMAN WAS FORCED TO GRAPPLE WITH HIM.
HOLD IT, JENKINS... YOU'VE GOT TO GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF! WE DON'T WANT THE JAPS TO HEAR US, DO WE?
THE WELSHMAN CALMED DOWN AND SMILER SQUEEZED HIS ARM REASSURINGLY.
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, CHUM! YOU MARK MY WORDS! THE STREAM CAN'T BE VERY FAR OFF NOW AND...
WHAT WAS THAT?

GREEN'S SUDDEN, LOW WARNING SWUNG THEM ROUND, THEIR NAGGING THIRST FORGOTTEN. THEIR RIFLES LIFTED MENACINGLY AS A RUSTLE IN THE UNDERGROWTH HERALDED SOMEONE'S APPROACH...
ME FRIEND... DON'T SHOOT! I GOOD MAN AND HELP YOU!
LISTEN, MATE, IF YOU GO CREEPING ABOUT ON CARPET SLIPPERS YOU WON'T BE AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO HELP ANYONE! WHO ARE YOU?
THE BURMAN SPOKE QUICKLY...NERVOUSLY...
BRITISH TOMMIES CALL ME JOE GOODMAN...I HELP PLENTY AGAINST EVIL JAP MAN. COME! YOU HIDE IN MY VILLAGE WHILE I GET HELP.
CAREFUL, SARGE, IT MAY BE A TRICK!

THE BURMAN FUMBLED EAGERLY IN HIS SHIRT AND PRODUCED A DIRTY, CRUMPLED PIECE OF PAPER...
I CAN PROVE I GOOD MAN. I HAVE LETTER. BRITISH OFFICER VERY PLEASED WITH ME... OFFICER HE SAY ME JUST THE JOB. HERE YOU SEE.
SERGEANT FREEMAN READ FROM THE PAPER THOUGHTFULLY...
...HAS PROVED HELPFUL AND WILLING AND IS COMPLETELY TRUSTWORTHY HM! IT LOOKS GENUINE ENOUGH! SIGNED BY MAJOR HAMILTON AT BRIGADE H.Q., SO WE CAN'T BE FAR AWAY FROM OUR OWN COMPANY.
STILL GREEN LOOKED UNEASILY AT THE MAN WHO SAID HE HAD BEEN NICKNAMED JOE GOODMAN...
I SUPPOSE IT'S ALL RIGHT, SARGE.
WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE A CHANCE. WE'VE GOT TO HAVE WATER!
...AND HEAVEN HELP HIM IF HE'S ONE OF THESE COLLABORATORS!

THE FOUR SOLDIERS FOLLOWED THE BEAMING BURMAN, TO A NATIVE VILLAGE. IT SEEMED DESERTED BUT SO MANY NATIVES HAD FLED INTO THE JUNGLE BEFORE THE SAVAGERY OF THE JAPANESE, THAT THEY THOUGHT NOTHING OF IT.
YOU SAFE HERE. THIS MY VILLAGE. YOU REST IN MY HOUSE WHILE I GO FIND YOUR FRIENDS. PLENTY WATER TO DRINK IN THERE.

IT WAS HOT AND CLOSE IN THE HUT BUT AFTER THEY HAD QUENCHED THEIR THIRSTS, THEY WERE GLAD TO FLING THEMSELVES DOWN AND RELAX. WHEN AN HOUR PASSED AND THE BURMAN HAD STILL NOT RETURNED, HOWEVER, THEY BECAME RESTLESS.
I DON'T LIKE THIS! WHAT THE BLAZES IS KEEPING HIM?
YOU DIDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING TO GO RIGHT, DID YOU, SARGE... NOT WITH GREEN ROUND OUR NECKS! IT'S TROUBLE WE'RE GETTING... I TELL YOU... I CAN FEEL IT IN MY BONES!

FREEMAN'S LIPS TIGHTENED AND HE BEGAN TO REPRIMAND JENKINS ANGRILY WHEN...
SHUT UP AND KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN, I - BY HEAVENS!
STAND STILL - ALL OF YOU!

THE BRITISH TURNED IN HORROR... AND RAGE.
THAT TREACHEROUS BURMAN! WHY...I'D LIKE TO...
DIDN'T I TELL YOU THAT GREEN WILL BE THE DEATH OF US!
SILENCE... AND DON'T MAKE A MOVE...OR YOU DIE!

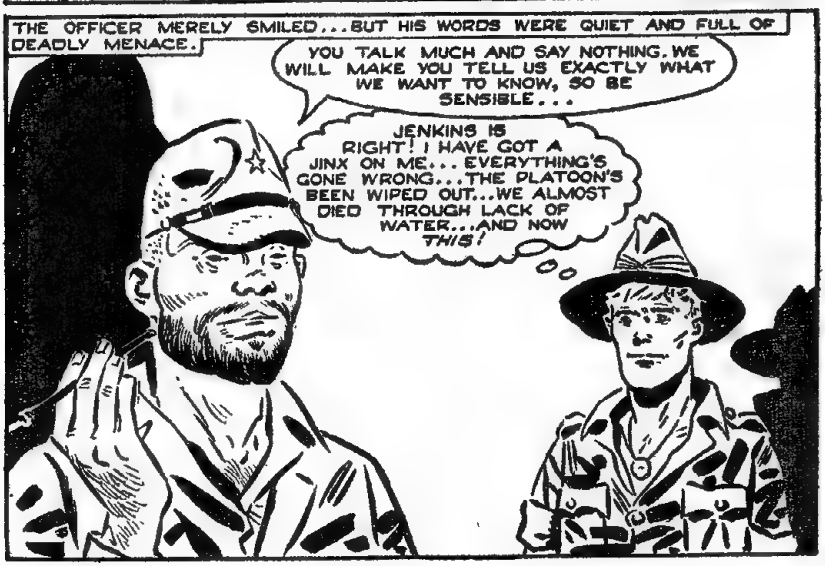
MORE JAPANESE PUSHED THEIR WAY INTO THE HUT AND PRODDED THE BRITISH BRUTALLY INTO THE OPEN WHERE AN OPEN TRUCK HAD JUST DRAWN-UP.
GET INTO THE TRUCK, BRITISH SWINE... AND QUICKLY! QUICKLY!
STEADY, SMILER! DO AS HE SAYS, LADS!

SMILER GLARED AT THE GRINNING BURMAN WHO STOOD NEARBY AND WAS SLOW TO CLAMBER ABOARD...
YOU WILL MOVE...AND QUICKLY, SMARTLY WHEN YOU GET AN ORDER FROM YOUR JAPANESE MASTERS!

A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE VILLAGE, THE TRUCK BUMPED ON TO A ROUGH TRACK AND SOON IT BEGAN TO PASS CONCEALED DUMPS OF AMMUNITION, WEAPONS AND FUEL.
WELL, THIS IS THE END OF THE WAR FOR US!
IF ONLY WE COULD TIP OFF THE R.A.F. ABOUT THAT DUMP! THEY'D SOON MAKE SHORT WORK OF IT!

SERGEANT FREEMAN'S LIPS PURSED IN A LOW WHISTLE AS THEY RAN CLOSE TO A RIVER, FOR MOORED TO ITS MUDDY BANKS WERE ROWS OF SUPPLY-LADEN RAFTS . . .
I BET OUR CHAPS DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE TARGETS IN THIS AREA! DARN IT! IF ONLY WE COULD —
FORGET IT, SARGE! THERE'S NOTHING MUCH WE CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW, WORSE LUCK!

WHEN THEY REACHED THE ENEMY H.Q. THEY WERE THRUST INTO A HUT WHERE THEY WERE INTERROGATED BY ANOTHER JAPANESE OFFICER, A SNEERING DANDY OF A MAN.
YOU TELL ME STRENGTH OF YOUR BATTALION AND TROOP MOVEMENTS IN THIS AREA, BRITISH DOG!
NUMBER, RANK AND NAME'S AS MUCH AS YOU GET, MISTER! GO AND SOIL YOUR FACE!


THE OFFICER MERELY SMILED...BUT HIS WORDS WERE QUIET AND FULL OF DEADLY MENACE.
YOU TALK MUCH AND SAY NOTHING. WE WILL MAKE YOU TELL US EXACTLY WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW, SO BE SENSIBLE...
JENKINS IS RIGHT! I HAVE GOT A JINX ON ME... EVERYTHING'S GONE WRONG...THE PLATOON'S BEEN WIPED OUT...WE ALMOST DIED THROUGH LACK OF WATER...AND NOW THIS!

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A SCUFFLE OUTSIDE THE HUT... DARK FIGURES FILLED THE DOORWAY AND BEFORE THE JAPANESE COULD SWING ROUND, A TOMMY GUN RATTLED HARSHLY...
WHAT THE... BY GLORY! OUR LADS!
THE NEWCOMERS SNAPPED QUICK ORDERS AT THE ENEMY'S PRISONERS...
QUICK! THE SOONER WE GET OUT OF HERE THE BETTER! WE'VE RAISED A HORNETS' NEST!

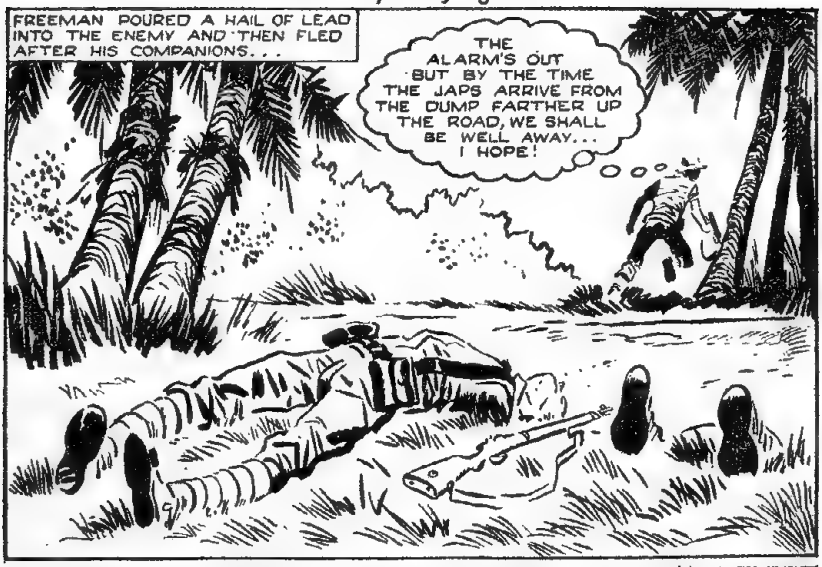
A SAVAGE BURST OF GUNFIRE GREETED THEM AS THEY LEAPT FROM THE HUT. . .
DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE. YOU FOOLS! RAPID FIRE! SHOOT DOWN THE BRITISH SWINE!
MAKE FOR THE JUNGLE! THERE'S HUNDREDS OF NIPS DOWN BY THE RIVER...WE DON'T WANT TO RUN INTO THEM!

HEART THUDDING, SMILER POUNDED AFTER THE OTHERS AND ALMOST RAN INTO A JAPANESE SOLDIER.
YOU DIE, BRITISH SWINE!

THE RIFLE FLAMED AND A BULLET WHINED PAST SMILER'S HEAD. BUT THE ENGLISHMAN LUNGED FORWARD AND HIS FIST SLAMMED AGAINST THE JAP'S JAW.

BUT THEY WERE A LONG WAY FROM SAFETY. AS THEY SPRINTED TOWARDS THE COVER OF THE UNDERGROWTH, MORE OF THE ENEMY APPEARED FROM AMONGST THE HUTS...
LUMME! WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT! THIS IS OUR LOT!
KEEP GOING, SMILER! KEEP GOING!

ONE OF THEIR RESCUERS DROPPED DEAD IN HIS TRACKS AND INSTANTLY SERGEANT FREEMAN HAD SNATCHED UP THE MAN'S GUN AND HAD TURNED ON THE ENEMY...


FREEMAN POURED A HAIL OF LEAD INTO THE ENEMY AND THEN FLED AFTER HIS COMPANIONS...
THE ALARM'S OUT BUT BY THE TIME THE JAPS ARRIVE FROM THE DUMP FARTHER UP THE ROAD, WE SHALL BE WELL AWAY... I HOPE!

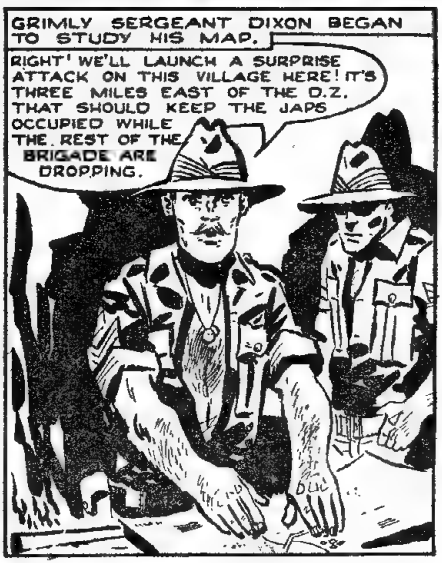
THE RELEASED PRISONERS WERE TAKEN TO A CAVE IN THE HILLS AND SERGEANT FREEMAN'S EYES BULGED WHEN HE SAW THE NUMBER OF TROOPS THERE, FOR HE KNEW THEY WERE WELL BEHIND ENEMY LINES.
WHAT THE HECK! HAS THERE BEEN A BIG PUSH!
NO! WE'RE PART OF A PATROL PARACHUTED BEHIND THE JAP LINES. OUR JOB IS TO DISRUPT THE JAP LINES OF COMMUNICATION MY NAME'S DIXON, BY THE WAY.

SERGEANT DIXON TOOK THEM INTO A SMALL CAVE NEARBY, WHICH WAS PLATOON HEADQUARTERS.
WELL, WE'RE CERTAINLY GLAD YOU SHOWED UP. BEATS ME HOW YOU KNEW WE WERE THERE!
THAT WASN'T DIFFICULT. LET'S GO AND GET A CUP OF CHAR AND I'LL SHOW YOU!
MOMENTS LATER, FREEMAN AND HIS MEN GOT A SHOCK.
HEY, SARGE! IT'S THE BURMAN YOU AND SMILER RESCUED FROM THE BLAZING HUT!
YOU GOOD FRIEND, SAVE MY LIFE. I SEE YOU CAPTURED SO I TELL SOLDIERS!
WELL, THIS IS A TURN UP FOR THE BOOK! THANKS, MATE!

SERGEANT DIXON TOLD FREEMAN AND HIS COMPANIONS THAT HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO HELP THEM RETURN TO THEIR OWN UNIT. . .
NOT FOR A WHILE, ANYWAY. WE'VE HAD CASUALTIES AND ARE SHORT-HANDED. I'VE ALREADY BEEN IN TOUCH BY RADIO WITH HEADQUARTERS AND YOU'RE TO COME ON OUR STRENGTH FOR THE TIME BEING'
NOTHING WOULD SUIT US BETTER'

THAT'S RIGHT ENOUGH! I'M READY TO HAVE ANOTHER CRACK AT THE JAPS ANYTIME? REMEMBER WHAT THAT OFFICER BLOKE SAID? MOVE QUICKLY WHEN THE MASTER RACE GIVE AN ORDER! I'LL GIVE THEM MASTER RACE'
SARGE! THERE'S SOMETHING COMING THROUGH ON THE SET'

RECEPTION WAS NOT GOOD OWING TO THE HEAVY STATIC, BUT THE WAITING MEN WERE JUST ABLE TO HEAR THEIR ORDERS. . .
...AND AS PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED HORNETS WILL ARRIVE AT KENSINGTON AT SEVENTEEN HUNDRED HOURS. IMPERATIVE BEES CAUSE DIVERSION...QUEEN BEE OUT.


GRIMLY SERGEANT DIXON BEGAN TO STUDY HIS MAP.
RIGHT! WE'LL LAUNCH A SURPRISE ATTACK ON THIS VILLAGE HERE! IT'S THREE MILES EAST OF THE D.Z. THAT SHOULD KEEP THE JAPS OCCUPIED WHILE THE REST OF THE BRIGADE ARE DROPPING.

Chapter 4. TEST OF COURAGE

IT WAS A SOUND PLAN AND ONLY JENKINS SEEMED WORRIED. NO LESS COURAGEOUS THAN HIS COMPANIONS, PERHAPS IT WAS HIS SUPERSTITIOUS CELTIC ANCESTRY WHICH KEPT ALIVE HIS FEAR THAT GREEN WAS UNLUCKY.

SOON AFTER DAWN THE PLATOON SET OFF ALONG A ROCKY PATH THAT WOUND THROUGH THE HILLS. IT WAS QUICKER MOVING ACROSS THE HILLS TO THE JAP-HELD VILLAGE, BUT THEY WERE EXPOSED TO THE FULL GLARE OF THE SUN... AND THE ENEMY...

SEVERAL MEN WERE HIT... INCLUDING THE PLATOON SIGNALLER...
AAH!
THE SIGNALLER WAS KILLED AND THE RADIO WRECKED IN THE FALL. THEY WERE OUT OF CONTACT WITH HEADQUARTERS...
WE'RE UP AGAINST IT, SARGE!
AYE, LAD! BUT WE'RE DOING WHAT WE CAME TO DO-WE'RE DRAWING THE JAPS AWAY FROM THE D.Z.
THE BATTLE WAS MOUNTING IN CRESCENDO- BUT COULD THEY HOLD OUT UNTIL THE PARACHUTISTS' DROP CAME.
I THINK I'D BETTER RECCE THE D.Z. FREEMAN, WILL YOU TAKE OVER HERE?
OKAY, DIXON - BUT WATCH YOUR STEP! THE NIPS HAVE SNIPERS EVERYWHERE!

BUT A SHOCK AWAITED SERGEANT DIXON WHEN HE SCANNED THE AREA OF THE D.Z. THROUGH HIS BINOCULARS...
GREAT HEAVENS! THE JAPS ARE AS THICK AS FLIES, BANG ON THE DROPPING ZONE? OUR BLOKES WILL BE MASSACRED! WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING...

THE GRIM NEWS SHOOK THE PLATOON...
I DON'T THINK THEY CAN HAVE GOT WIND OF THE PARACHUTE ATTACK... IT'S JUST DARN BAD LUCK. THEY MAY HAVE MOVED IN BECAUSE THEY THINK OUR FORCE IS LARGER THAN IT ACTUALLY IS
YOU'RE RIGHT...IT'S BAD LUCK AGAIN! WE'VE GOT A JINX ON US, YOU MARK MY WORDS!

SERGEANT FREEMAN HAD NOTICED THE EFFECT JENKINS' WORDS HAD ON GREEN AND HE SNAPPED AT THE WELSHMAN
WHY DON'T YOU PIPE DOWN, JENKINS! HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED YET THAT THINGS ARE ALWAYS GOING WRONG WITH THE BRITISH ARMY... BUT WE WIN THROUGH, LAD, AND WE'LL WIN THROUGH AGAIN!
THIS IS A HECK OF A MESS! WITH THE RADIO SMASHED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RAVINE, WE'VE NO WAY OF TIPPING OFF HEADQUARTERS! BUT WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING OR THE BOYS WILL BE SLAUGHTERED WHEN THEY DROP!
HEY, DIXON - I'VE JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING!

SERGEANT FREEMAN BEGAN TO SPEAK QUICKLY, HIS EYES GLEAMING . . .
WHEN WE WERE TAKEN PRISONER BY THOSE JAPS, WE PASSED A LARGE ARMS DUMP AT THE ROADSIDE. . . GUNS, AMMO AND FLAME-THROWERS! IF WE COULD SEIZE SOME OF THOSE AND CAUSE A DIVERSION - PERHAPS SET FIRE TO THE RAFTS AT THE RIVER - WE'D VERY LIKELY DRAW THE JAPS AWAY FROM THE D.Z.
YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING THERE, FREEMAN!

ALL THE MEN, EXCEPT JENKINS, GREETED THE PLAN WITH ENTHUSIASM. THE WELSHMAN REMAINED SILENT. . . AND IT WAS EASY FOR GREEN TO READ HIS THOUGHTS . . .
HE'S AGAINST IT. HE'S AFRAID IT WILL ALL GO WRONG. MAYBE EVERYTHING *WOULD* TURN OUT RIGHT IF I WASN'T WITH THEM. . .

CONSCIOUS OF JENKINS' BROODING GLANCE, GREEN WAS FAST LOSING HIS SENSE OF PROPORTION, ALLOWING DOUBTS TO FILL HIS OWN MIND. HE TRIED TO SHAKE OFF HIS UNEASINESS AS SERGEANT FREEMAN AND HIS PARTY WITHDREW FROM THE MAIN BATTLE AND MADE FOR THE ENEMY DUMP.
THERE IT IS, LADS! NOT A SOUND! WE DON'T WANT TO RAISE THE ALARM BEFORE WE GET THOSE FLAME-THROWERS. I'LL DEAL WITH ONE OF THE BLIGHTERS!
...AND ME THE OTHER, SARGE! LET'S GO!

SILENTLY FREEMAN AND SMILER STEALTHILY WORMED THEIR WAY CLOSE TO THE SENTRIES... AND THEN THEY POUNCED.

MOMENTS LATER, THE JAPANESE GUARDS LAY STILL AND SILENT ON THE GROUND. THE PLATOON RACED FORWARD AND SOME OF THEM STRAPPED ON THE FLAME-THROWERS LYING AMONGST THE MATERIALS ON ON THE DUMP.
MAKE IT SNAPPY, LADS! IT ONLY WANTS ANOTHER THREE HOURS AND THE PARACHUTISTS WILL BE DROPPING! WE'VE GOT TO GET THE JAPS CLEAR OF THAT D.Z. BEFORE THEN!
AT LAST THEY BROKE THROUGH THE JUNGLE ON TO THE RIVER BANK. BEFORE THEM LAY THE JAPANESE RAFTS, STACKED WITH SUPPLIES.
THOSE WITH FLAME-THROWERS, SPREAD ALONG THE BANK AND SET LIGHT TO AS MANY RAFTS AS YOU CAN!

BUT EVEN AS THE MEN MOVED TO OBEY, THERE CAME A SHRILL CRY FROM AMONG THE TREES AND A RATTLE OF SMALL ARMS FIRE.
BRITISHERS! STOP THEM! THEY MUST NOT DESTROY THE RAFTS! QUICKLY! SHOOT THEM DOWN!

INSTANTLY, SERGEANT FREEMAN RAPPED OUT ORDERS. . .
DON'T PANIC, YOU MEN. MAKE FOR THE RAFTS AND SET 'EM AFIRE! GREEN, SMILER, JENKINS, STAY WITH ME! GIVE 'EM COVERING FIRE!

A MOMENT LATER, THE SULLEN ROAR OF THE FLAME-THROWERS MINGLED WITH THE HARSH CLATTER OF THE BREN AS IT SWEPT THE JUNGLE CONCEALING THE ENEMY.

RAFT AFTER RAFT BURST INTO FLAMES AND THE INTENSE HEAT DROVE THE SOLDIERS BACK FROM THE WATER'S EDGE AND LICKED GREEDILY AT THE LEAVES OF THE JUNGLE. . .

THE JAPANESE SURGED FORWARD... DRIVEN ON IN FRENZY BY THEIR OFFICERS AS THEIR PRECIOUS SUPPLIES WENT UP IN GREASY, BLACK SMOKE.
SEND URGENT SIGNAL. REINFORCEMENTS REQUIRED AT ONCE! HEAVY CASUALTIES SUFFERED. HURRY, RESERVE TROOPS ARE THREE MILES AWAY...WE MUST HAVE THEM?
AGAIN AND AGAIN THE HANDFUL OF BRITISH TROOPS HURLED BACK THE ENEMY, FOR EVERY CASUALTY INFLICTED, EVERY MINUTE THE ENEMY WERE HELD IN BATTLE, WOULD INCREASE THE SUCCESS OF THE DIVERSION.
KEEP AT IT, LADS, WE'RE DOING FINE!
I BET THIS HAS DONE THE TRICK! THERE'S JAPS EVERYWHERE.

THE BRITISH PATROL WAS STRUNG OUT ALONG THE RIVER BANK, EACH MAN FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE. GREEN, ON THE FLANK, EDGED FARTHER ALONG OUT OF THE SMOKE AND SUDDENLY HE SIGHTED A GROUP OF JAPS.
HURRY, MEN...IF WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS ACCURSED SMOKE WE CAN CREEP ROUND AND ATTACK THEM IN THE REAR. USE EVERY BIT OF COVER... THEY MUST NOT GUESS WE ARE UPON THEM UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE!
MORE JAPS - FRESH ONES BY THE LOOKS OF IT!

GREEN GUESSED THAT SERGEANT FREEMAN'S PLAN TO DRAW THE ENEMY TROOPS AWAY FROM THE D.Z. HAD SUCCEEDED. WITHOUT A TRACE OF FEAR, HE ROSE TO HIS FEET - AND THE TOMMY GUN IN HIS HANDS CHATTERED INTO VIOLENT LIFE.

JAP AFTER JAP WAS CUT DOWN BY THAT HAIL OF LEAD. BUT HERE AND THERE, AN ENEMY SURVIVED ~ TO FIGHT BACK. BULLETS RIPPED PAST HIM ~ A RICOCHET WHINED OFF A TREE BOUGH ~ AND PAIN STABBED GREEN'S HEAD
THE REST OF THE PLATOON WERE IN DIRE STRAITS AS THEY STROVE TO HOLD OFF THEIR FANATICAL ATTACKERS. BUT SERGEANT FREEMAN KNEW THEY HAD SUCCEEDED IN THEIR INTENTION. . .
IT'S NEARLY TIME FOR THE PARATROOP DROP, AND IF THE LUCK IS WITH US, THE D.Z. SHOULD BE CLEAR OF THE JAPS. THEY MUST ALL BE HERE! BUT WE CAN'T HOLD 'EM OFF MUCH LONGER!

THE SERGEANT TURNED AS THERE WAS A RUSTLE AT HIS SIDE. IT WAS SMILER ~ STILL GRINNING ~ STILL CHEERFUL...
THEY'RE MASSING TO ATTACK AGAIN, SMILER, AND THEY'RE CREEPING UP BEHIND US... I THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE IT!
LET'S GIVE THE LITTLE HEATHENS THE OLD ONE-TWO, SARGE? FOR GREENIE, AND BUSTER AND TOMMO!

THEN THE ATTACK CAME. WHAT REMAINED OF THE PLATOON SLAMMED SHOT AFTER SHOT INTO THE HORDES OF YELLOW MEN AND THEN THEY WERE ON THEIR FEET, HACKING ~ SLASHING ~ IN AN UNEQUAL BATTLE THAT COULD HAVE BUT ONE END.

A SAVAGE BLOW FINALLY SENT SERGEANT FREEMAN SPRAWLING. HE HAD FOUGHT LIKE A MAN POSSESSED AND ONLY A SHARP COMMAND SAVED HIM FROM BEING BAYONETED...
WAIT! I HAVE A BETTER IDEA! THESE BRITISH SCUM THINK THEY ARE THE BRAVE ONES... SUPERIOR TO MIGHTY JAPANESE MAN. VERY WELL...WE SHALL TEST THEIR COURAGE!

SLOWLY, SADISTICALLY, THE JAP OFFICER DREW HIS SAMURAI SWORD. FREEMAN SUDDENLY FELT HIS MOUTH GO DRY...

THE SERGEANT, SMILER, JENKINS AND ANOTHER SOLDIER HAD SURVIVED - TO FACE A DEATH MOST VILE. AT BAYONET POINT, THEY WERE FORCED TO KNEEL...
YOU ARE ALONE, YOU BRITISH DOGS! NOTHING CAN SAVE YOU! KISS THE DIRT AND ACKNOWLEDGE US YOUR MASTERS. ALREADY I SEE ONE OF YOU WEAKENS - AND IS ABOUT TO SCREAM FOR MERCY. LET ME HEAR YOU, BRITISH SOLDIER!

THERE WAS A MOMENT'S SILENCE. THEN SMILER SPOKE. HIS VOICE CAME LOUD AND CLEAR AND CONTEMPTUOUS.
DROP DEAD, YOU SLIMY TOAD!

SCREECHING WITH FURY, THE JAPANESE OFFICER SWUNG HIS SWORD ABOVE HIS HEAD—AND THEN A BLURR OF SHOTS RANG OUT FROM THE JUNGLE EDGE.
HE'S KISSING THE DIRT, NOT SMILER! I GOT HERE JUST IN TIME!
IT WAS GREEN—DAZED STILL BUT FIGHTING MAD.

THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS SCATTERED, SHRIEKING IN TERROR FROM THE VENGEANCE THAT LASHED THEM IN LEADEN FURY.
LUMME! IT'S GREEN! OLD GREENIE!
IT'S A MIRACLE I'M SEEING, LOOK YOU!

THEN CAME FURTHER BURSTS OF RAPID FIRE. FIGURES BEGAN TO SWARM FROM AMONGST THE TREES. FIGURES IN CAMOUFLAGED JUMPING JACKETS AND RED BERETS.
WE'RE SAVED! SAVED! IT'S THE PARATROOPERS! GOOD OLD GREENIE! HE MUST HAVE BROUGHT THEM!

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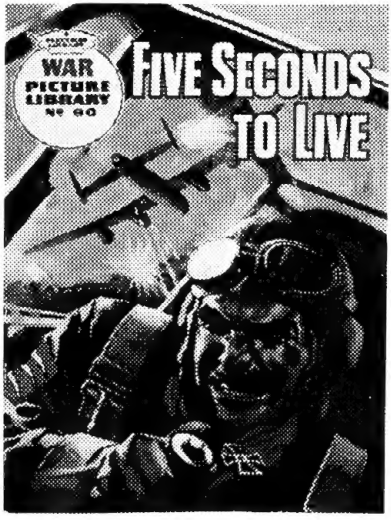

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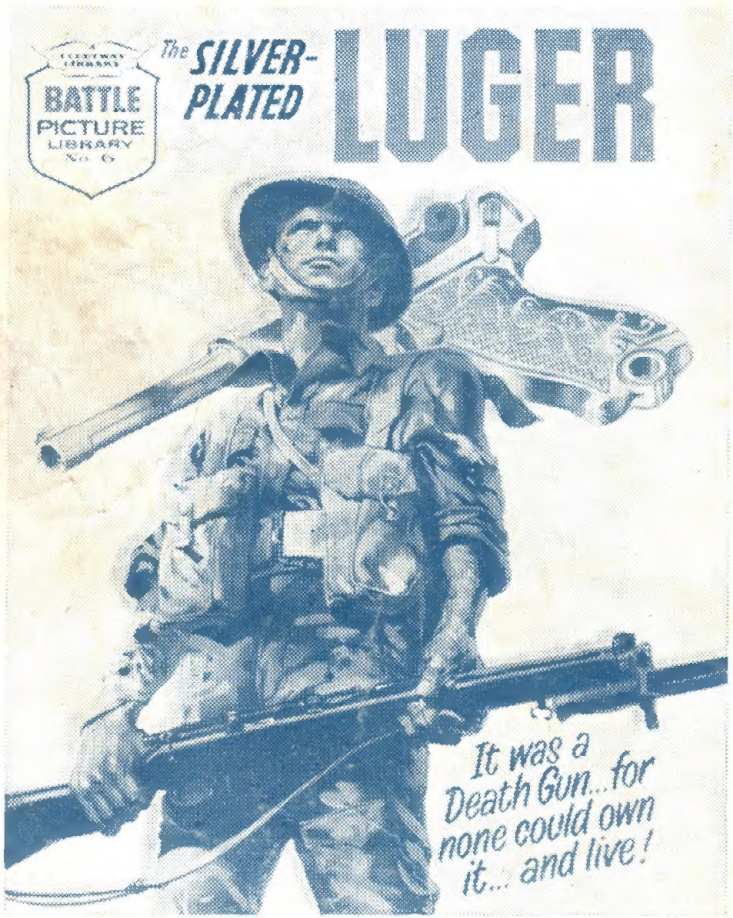

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